

UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of: Egbert Classen et al.
Application Number: 10/583,637
Filing Date: August 3, 2007
Group Art Unit: 2833
Examiner: Brigitte R. Hammond
Title: CONNECTOR DEVICE FOR PRODUCING AN
ELECTRICAL CONNECTINO BETWEEN A MAINS CABLE
AND A LOOM

Mail Stop Appeal Brief - Patents

Commissioner for Patents

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APPEAL BRIEF

Pursuant to 37 CFR 1.192, Appellants hereby file an appeal brief in the above-identified application. This Appeal Brief is accompanied by the requisite fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(f).

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(1) REAL PARTY IN INTEREST

The real party in interest is BSH Bosch und Siemens Hausgeräte GmbH.

(2) RELATED APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES

There are no appeals or interferences that will directly affect or be directly affected by or have a bearing on the Board's decision in the pending appeal.

(3) STATUS OF CLAIMS

Claims 14-24 are present in this application. Claims 1-13, 25 and 26 have been canceled. Claims 14, 15, 23 and 24 have been rejected and are on appeal. Claims 16-22 are indicated as containing allowable subject matter.

(4) STATUS OF AMENDMENTS

No Amendments have been filed since the final Office Action dated December 20, 2010.

(5) SUMMARY OF CLAIMED SUBJECT MATTER AND SPECIFIC

SUPPORT FOR INDEPENDENT CLAIMS

Independent claim 14 recites a connector device for the production of an electrical connection between a mains cable and a cable harness in an electrical device, especially a household appliance. The device includes a first plug-in connector including connection elements coupleable to the cable harness. The connection elements effect a detachable mechanical and electrical connection between the first plug-in connector and the cable harness. See p. 5, lines 12-19. The device also includes a second plug-in connector establishing a detachable mechanical and electrical connection to the mains cable, where the second plug-in connector is provided for a plurality of different mains cables and has an

identical connector configuration for each of the different mains cables. See p. 5, lines 21-26.

Independent claim 24 recites a connection system comprising a plurality of different mains cables each having a differently configured mains contact plug and a connector device for the production of an electrical connection between any of the plurality of mains cables and a cable harness in an electrical device. The connector device includes a first plug-in connector including connection elements coupleable to the cable harness, where the connection elements effect a detachable mechanical and electrical connection to the cable harness of the electrical device, and a second plug-in connector establishing a detachable mechanical and electrical connection to any of the mains cables. See p. 5, lines 12-26. The second plug-in connector is provided for the plurality of different mains cables and has an identical connector configuration for each of the different mains cables. The plurality of mains cables have a corresponding connector contact plug with an identical configuration regardless of the design of the mains contact plug and comprise a cable harness whose plurality of electrical conductors can be connected to the connector device by means of a single plug-in contact connection. See p. 5, line 21 – p. 6, line 10.

In one arrangement, at least the second plug-in connector includes structure that after plugging together with the connector contact plug of the mains cable protects the second plug-in connector from penetration of dripping or splashed water. See p. 3, lines 25-29. The first plug-in connector may be a group plug with a plurality of contact elements. See p. 6, lines 16-20.

(6) GROUNDS OF REJECTION TO BE REVIEWED ON APPEAL

1. Whether claims 14, 15 and 23 are unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over

Judge et al. (U.S. Published Patent Application No. 2004/0005818).

2. Whether claims 14, 23 and 24 are unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Machado (U.S. Patent No. 6,764,321).

(7) ARGUMENT

1. *Claims 14, 15 and 23 are not unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Judge et al. (U.S. Published Patent Application No. 2004/0005818).*

The Judge publication describes a solenoid connector that serves to connect two apparatuses and/or enable simultaneous control of two appliances. The solenoid is configured to intercept the control signal to an apparatus that is redirected to a remote device before returning the signal to the apparatus. According to the Examiner, the solenoid connector 70 shown in Fig. 3 meets the “connector device” defined in claim 14. In the embodiment shown in Fig. 3, the connector 70 includes male pins 70A-70C and female pins 70AA-70CC. Judge describes that the female pins are configured to accept the male pins of a typical apparatus solenoid 80.

In contrast with the claimed invention, the connector 70 in Judge does not serve as an electrical connector between a mains cable and a cable harness. Rather, the connector 70 shown in Fig. 3 connects between an apparatus 83 and an apparatus control switch 60. Judge is silent with regard to a plug-in connector for a plurality of different mains cables. In this context, the Examiner focuses on the language of the claims, providing that “the terms detachable/coupleable just mean that the structure be able to be coupled/detached.” Appellants neither agree nor disagree with this statement – regardless, the Examiner

disregards the crux of the invention whereby an identical connector configuration is provided for each of a plurality of different mains cables.

With regard to the dependent claims, Appellants submit that these claims are allowable at least by virtue of their dependency on an allowable independent claim and because they recite additional patentable subject. For example, dependent claim 15 recites that at least the second plug-in connector includes structure that after plugging together with the connector contact plug of the mains cable protects the second plug-in connector from penetration of dripping or splashed water. The Examiner contends that the external casing 75 in Judge is waterproof, but there is no description to that effect in Judge. This is conjecture by the Examiner, which is not sufficient to support the rejection.

Reversal of the rejection is requested.

2. *Claims 14, 23 and 24 are not unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Machado (U.S. Patent No. 6,764,321).*

Machado discloses a ground potential adaptor that enables live and neutral contacts of a supply outlet to be isolated from live and neutral contacts of an electrical device. According to Machado, the adaptor serves to earth the equipment through the earth connection of the mains cable and to isolate the mains voltage by severing connections to the live and neutral pins of the equipment plug. The connector device of the claimed invention, in contrast, facilitates a connection between a mains cable and an electrical device. This distinction is disregarded in the Office Action. Appellants submit that Machado lacks at least the claimed first plug-in connector including connection elements coupleable to the cable harness that

effect a detachable mechanical and electrical connection between the first plug-in connector and the cable harness.

Additionally, Machado lacks the claimed second plug-in connector establishing a detachable mechanical and electrical connection to the mains cable, where the second plug-in connector is provided for a plurality of different mains cables and has an identical connector configuration for each of the different mains cables. This shortcoming in Machado has yet to be addressed by the Examiner.

With regard to dependent claim 23, Appellants submit that this claims is allowable at least by virtue of its dependency on an allowable independent claim and because it recites additional patentable subject matter.

Reversal of the rejection is requested.

(8) CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing discussion, Appellants respectfully request reversal of the Examiner's rejections.

Respectfully submitted,

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CLAIMS APPENDIX

1-13. (Canceled)

14. (Rejected) A connector device for the production of an electrical connection between a mains cable and a cable harness in an electrical device, especially a household appliance, comprising a first plug-in connector for establishing a detachable mechanical and electrical connection to the cable harness of the electrical device, and a second plug-in connector for establishing a detachable mechanical and electrical connection to the mains cable, wherein the second plug-in connector is provided for a plurality of different mains cables and has an identical connector configuration for each of the different mains cables.

15. (Rejected) The connector device according to claim 14, wherein at least the second plug-in connector is configured such that after plugging together with the connector contact plug of the mains cable, the second plug-in connector is protected from penetration of dripping or splashed water.

16. (Allowable) The connector device according to claim 14, wherein the connector device is configured to include an interference suppression filter and the housing of the connector device is constructed to detachably receive the interference suppression filter.

17. (Allowable) The connector device according to claim 16, wherein the detachable receiver is formed by at least one plug connection constructed in the housing.

18. (Allowable) The connector device according to claim 16, wherein the plug connection forms a plug contact which takes over the electrical contacting of the interference suppression filter in addition to the mechanical holding thereof.

19. (Allowable) The connector device according to claim 16, wherein the interference suppression filter has a charge storage device.

20. (Allowable) The connector device according to claim 16, wherein the interference suppression filter has an inductance.

21. (Allowable) The connector device according to claim 20, wherein conductor tracks for producing the electrical connection between the mains cable and the cable harness are provided therein which can be separated by means of a separating device for breaking the electrical connection.

22. (Allowable) The connector device according to claim 20, wherein the interference suppression filter has a discharging resistor.

23. (Rejected) The connector device according to claim 14, wherein the first plug-in connector is a group plug with a plurality of contact elements.

24. (Rejected) A connection system comprising a connector device for the production of an electrical connection between a mains cable and a cable harness in an electrical device, especially a household appliance, comprising a first plug-in connector for establishing a detachable mechanical and electrical connection to the cable harness of the electrical device, and a second plug-in connector for establishing a detachable mechanical and electrical connection to the mains cable, wherein the second plug-in connector is provided for a plurality of different mains cables and has an identical connector configuration for each of the different mains cables, the mains cable having a corresponding connector contact plug with an identical configuration regardless of the design of the mains contact plug and comprising a cable harness whose plurality of electrical conductors can be connected to the connector device by means of a single plug-in contact connection.

25-26. (Canceled)

EVIDENCE APPENDIX

None

RELATED APPEALS APPENDIX

None